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TWO STOCKTON IDENTITY THIEVES PLEAD GUILTY

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that GINA DENISE LEWELLEN, 33, of Stockton, pleaded guilty today to bank fraud and possession of stolen mail, and that YOLANDA MARTINEZ, 25, also of Stockton, pleaded guilty to attempted bank fraud. Both women entered their guilty pleas before United States District Judge Lawrence K. Karlton.

These cases are the product of investigations by the United States Postal Inspection Service with the assistance of the Stockton Police Department.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Camil A. Skipper, who is prosecuting the cases, as part of her guilty plea, LEWELLEN admitted that in September 2005, she possessed dozens of stolen business and personal checks with a face value of over \$48,000, ten stolen credit cards, and eight counterfeit California driver's licenses in the names of mail theft victims. LEWELLEN also admitted that she made purchases in August 2005 at Babies R Us and Lowe's in Stockton using stolen checks while pretending to be the true account holder. Surveillance video from both stores depicted LEWELLEN making the purchases. According to Assistant United States Attorney Skipper, there were more than 50 mail theft victims involved in this case.

As part of her plea, MARTINEZ admitted that in November 2004 she tried to purchase several gift cards at Mervyn's in Stockton using a stolen check.

The sentencing date for LEWELLEN and MARTINEZ has been set for January 11, 2006 at 9:00 a.m before United States District Judge William B. Shubb. The maximum sentence the court can impose for a conviction of bank fraud or attempted bank fraud is 30 years imprisonment and a fine of \$1 million dollars. After their release from prison, both LEWELLEN and MARTINEZ will serve up to five years of supervised release.

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